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ABSTRACT

This study describes and evaluates an experimental program for reducing tardiness in a rural junior high school. The subject school housed approximately 1,500 seventh- and eighth-grade students. Under the "Lock Out Program," first-time tardy students were given a one-day work detail in the cafeteria for 15 minutes of their lunch period. Two tardies resulted in a two-day work detail and the student's parents were informed. Three tardies required a parent conference before the student could return to school. For the fourth and each subsequent tardy, students could choose a day's suspension or an after-school work detail. School staff had voiced dissatisfaction with the school's previous tardy policy, saying it lacked consistency and was too time-consuming. A review of the literature showed that consistency of dealing with tardies was the most important factor. Under the new program, teachers kept statistics on tardiness, which were compared with pre-implementation data. Feedback was gathered from administrators and teachers. Results showed an 87% decrease in the number of tardies and a substantial decrease in the amount of time administrators spent disciplining tardy referrals. There was a 20% increase, however, in out-of-school suspensions during the implementation period. A survey showed that 25 teachers who previously had reported tardiness to be a problem no longer thought it was a problem after implementation of the lock out program. It is concluded that the program should be continued at the school and that it should be given wider implementation. Appendices provide tables and figures, plus information on survey instruments. (TES)

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SEP 12 1990

Junior High School
Tardy Lock Out

by

Carolyn A. Scott

A Practicum Report
Submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the
Advancement of Education at Nova University in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science

The abstract of this report may be placed in a
National Database System for reference

June 1990

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I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Signed _____ .

ABSTRACT

Junior High School Tardy Lock Out.

Scott, Carolyn A., 1990: Practicum Report, Nova University, The Center for the Advancement of Education. Descriptors: Student Tardiness/Discipline Referrals/School Suspensions/Behavior Problems/ School Environment/Behavior Problems/Behavior Modification/ Student Absenteeism/Adolescence/Student Adjustment and Attitudes.

The Tardy Lock Out Program was designed and implemented in a rural junior high which houses seventh and eighth grade students from varied backgrounds. The program was designed to establish consistency among the staff in the handling of tardies. The program contained three basic objectives: (1) to decrease the number of tardies; (2) to decrease the number of suspensions due to tardies; and (3) to reduce the amount of time Assistant Principals spent in dealing with discipline of tardies. The program implemented did satisfy those objectives and was recommended for continued use in the future.

Appendix J

Nova University
Center For The Advancement of Education
3301 College Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314

Observer Verification Form

Verification of Practicum Activity

Dear Observer:

Practicum students in Nova's M.S. and Ed.S. programs are asked to provide external verification that the project activities reported in their final practicum documents took place as described. You have been designated an observer to fulfill this confirmation function by the student named below. On this sheet, then, please write a note attesting to your knowledge of the project activity described in the final practicum report to which this will be attached. (Note that you are not asked to evaluate or make judgments about the quality of the project.)

Practicum Title Junior High School Tardy Lock Out

Student's Name Carolyn A. Scott

Program Site Tampa Date June 1990

Observer's Name Lewis A. Brinson Lewis A. Brinson
(please print---------and sign)

Observer's position Assistant Principal Phone # 677-7181

Observer's comment on impact of the project (handwritten): The implementation of Mrs. Scott's tardy program has been a great asset to the overall function of our school. It has completely eliminated our tardy problem. I have also recommended this program to several of my Fellow workers in Hillsborough County.

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE

The practicum setting was a rural junior high school which housed grades seven and eight. The student body consisted of approximately 1,500 students, and had 102 teachers on staff. It was the largest junior high in the district comprising of almost 20 percent of the county's enrollment. Due to the school's location the entire student body arrived by bus each day. Thirty-six buses transported the students from the neighboring communities.

The academic curriculum included over 85 courses in the arts, sciences, humanities, vocational and exceptional areas. The school offered ten levels of Math and English, eight levels of Science, and seven levels of Social Studies. Students who qualify had the opportunity to participate in gifted, honors and advanced placement courses. Students also chose from 14 different elective classes.

The socio-economic status of the school population was varied. Forty percent of the student body qualified for free or reduced lunches. The majority came from middle or lower class families. The student body's

breakdown was as follows: 72 percent white, 22 percent Hispanic, 5 percent black, and 1 percent Indian and Asian students. Approximately 12 percent of the population was comprised of migrant students who seasonly moved in and out of the community. Enrollment, therefore, fluctuated depending on the seasonal crops. Also included in the population was carnival families who also are sometimes on the move. The target population for the practicum proposal consisted of all 7th and 8th-grade students at the practicum site.

Of the 1,500 students, 100 were housed at the Trainable Mentally Handicapped Center. Also at the practicum site was one Educable Mentally Handicapped class which used mainstreaming into the regular school setting, one Physically Handicapped unit and four units for the Severally Emotionally Disturbed.

Resource teacher conducted the four Specific Learning Disability classes and four Emotionally Handicapped units. Students were placed in these programs according to their individual, academic, and emotional needs. The students were also mainstreamed into the regular flow of classes.

The author of this practicum had been a teacher for the Emotionally Handicapped program for six years

at the practicum site. Extra responsibilities included cheerleading sponsor for two years, an adviser in the Quality Time program, a member of the Quality Time Committee, and a member of the Middle School committee.

Classes at the practicum site were 60 minutes in length and students were allowed five minutes to get to their next class. Each student was allowed three tardies in each class for a nine week period. On the fourth and each subsequent tardy, a discipline referral was sent to the Assistant Principal's office for action.

During the second nine weeks of the school year, 896 referrals were received by the Assistant Principal's office. Forty percent of these referrals were tardy related. Of the 332 tardy referrals turned in, eight teachers turned in 169 referrals. With a total of over 80 regular education teachers in the practicum site, this showed a lack of consistency in following the school-wide tardy policy. Thirty of these referrals resulted in out-of-school suspensions for the student. Purvis and Leonard (1985) believe that all teachers must be consistent in processing excused and unexcused tardies. They state that students exploit the weakness of inconsistency among teachers and administrators.

Promptness in getting to class is an essential part of a student's training to maintain a job in future years. Through this learning experience of self-discipline, a student contributed to his own future well-being.

The district tardy policy stated that any student failing to make an effort to attend class will be considered truant and subject to disciplinary action. Two unexcused tardies resulted in a warning by the teacher. Three unexcused tardies received a penalty of a 2 percent grade reduction (two points on a 100 point scale). Four or more tardies would be referred to the Assistant Principal's office for willful disobedience and suspension could result.

A survey (Appendix A: 26) was distributed to the practicum site's teachers and 25 were returned. Of the 25 teachers who responded, 75 percent felt that tardies were a problem in their classroom. Seventy-five percent felt students received lower academic grades due to their tardies. All teachers who returned the survey felt that a new program was needed to reduce the amount of tardies allowed in the nine week period.

When students came to class tardy, an extra burden was placed on the teacher and student. It created gaps in the content of the instruction because

vital subject matter would be omitted due to the tardiness of the student and the unwillingness of the teacher to stop the flow of learning. Stallings (1981) believed that when interruptions are allowed during class time, it implied to the student that what was occurring in the classroom lacked real value.

In an informal survey of 100 students at the practicum site, the following reasons for tardies were given:

1. need to socialize with friends,
2. not enough time in between classes,
3. campus too large,
4. needing to go to locker,
5. and, do not see any future use of learning to be on time.

During interviews held with the Assistant Principals, the tardy policy was discussed. Both Assistant Principals saw three major problems with current tardy policy. The number one problem was the non-consistency among teachers in dealing with student tardies. The other two problems was the time consumed in dealing with tardy referrals and too large amount of tardies allowed for each student.

In an informal survey with 25 of the practicum site teachers, the practicum writer asked how each

dealt with tardiness in their classes. The responses were as follows: lunch detention, standing entire class period, isolation away from peers, work detail during class, and loss of class privileges.

In order to alleviate the tardy problem at the practicum site, the author searched for a solution which showed consistency in handling tardies.

The objectives for this practicum were:

1. After the ten week implementation of the Lock Out Program, the percentage of tardy referrals would decrease by 50 percent as measured by comparing referrals to the second nine weeks to the number of referrals received during the ten week implementation period.

2. Upon completion of the Lock Out Program, the percentage of out of school suspensions related to tardies would decrease by 50 percent as measured by the number of referrals received prior to and after the implementation of the practicum.

3. Upon completion of the Lock Out Program, the time spent in disciplining tardies by the Assistant Principals would decrease by 50 percent as measured by a time chart completed prior to and during the implementation of the practicum.

4. Upon completion of the Tardy Lock Out Program, the percentage of teachers surveyed who felt that

tardies were a problem in their class would decrease from 75 percent to 25 percent as measured by comparing the responses from the survey given before and after implementation.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH AND SOLUTION STRATEGY

A review of the professional literature relevant to the problem of tardiness showed the relationship of tardy behavior to many different areas of life and offered solutions for alleviating the tardy problem.

Jerry Bergman (1978) suggested there were three major reasons for a student being habitually late to class: resistance, disorganization, and schedule conflicts.

Edigar and Marlow (1987) stated that when students were constantly tardy, sequential learning could not occur, subject matter and skills could not be developed, and much student talent was wasted. The authors also believed that students who do not perceive purpose in a formal education may elect to be tardy or absent as much as possible.

Martha Hegner (1987) related that tardy problems are usually a symptom of some other conflict facing the student. Hegner stated that conferences should be held with students to determine their needs. Students should be assessed individually and channeled into support situations. These should include weekly

support sessions, placement in personal growth groups, referrals to counselors or other social agencies as needed. Hegner stated that as students become more mature and recognize that they are accountable for their own behavior, the need for outside help diminishes.

Potthoff (1979) gave three techniques to reduce tardies. The first technique was a Daily Report Card which assisted those students who needed daily reminding and reinforcement. The second strategy was to use a weekly or bi-weekly contract card. This encouraged maintenance of on-time behavior. The third suggestion was to give Grade Point Credit which extended a reward for good individual tardy patterns over an entire grading period. Potthoff also stated that in each of the three techniques, a teacher must explain their desire to eliminate tardies, be consistent and show the student you disapprove of the behavior and not the student.

In the 15th Annual Gallop Poll, Gallup (1983) stated that the lack of student discipline was the number one problem in the nation's public schools. Tardiness to class without an acceptable excuse was one of the top five critical behavioral incidents in public secondary schools. Purvis and Leonard (1985)

offered the following strategies for reducing tardies. All teachers should monitor students in corridors by standing at their classroom doors. As soon as the tardy bell rings, a pre-class activity should be used. This activity should be a student-centered activity and only those in class on time should be allowed to participate. Also, academic credit should be given for this activity. Consistent checking and handling of tardies must be consistent among teachers. If not, students exploit this weakness and becomes a reward for tardy students. The last technique explained is to institute a reward system that enables students to exchange tokens earned for being on time for activities and privileges.

Learning can only take place when a student is present in the classroom (Beckerman, 1988). Beckerman suggested the technique of withholding eligibility to participate in any cocurricular activities such as sports, chorus, band, field trips or school dances.

James Andrews (1988) believed that it is time to reassess our approaches to dealing with problems in the educational system. Andrews feels that the "ordinary" family has changed and dealing with school problems in the old, traditional ways are no longer effective. Andrews suggested using group counseling

sessions that focus on day-to-day social problems and increased parent communication through the use of progress reports and telephone calls.

Hagerty (1988) suggested using a Saturday Work Program as an alternative to suspensions for rule infractions. Students and parents must sign accepting the terms of the work contract. The terms consist of being on time, showing up on the designated day, the work expected, and the results if rules are not followed.

Allen (1983) suggested the use of activities for legal education focusing on the consequences of breaking rules and committing crimes. Lessons should present a brief one page reading, followed by questions to determine student's understanding and judgement of the content. They suggested using school rules on tardiness for the elementary school child.

Matthews (1983) presented a paper at the annual meeting of National Middle Schools in Chicago, Illinois. In this paper was revealed a study that examined multiple outcomes of relaxation training. This project measured cognitive and affective (discipline, attendance, tardiness, and self-concept) changes in 532 7th-graders. These students participated in relaxation training for 15 minutes at the beginning of each school day for 9 months. The study found improvement in student self-concept, discipline (tardies) and achievement.

After reviewing the literature on tardies and looking at the whole idea behind the studies, it became apparent that consistency of dealing with tardies was the most important factor. Therefore, the practicum author chose the Lock Out Program for detering tardies because of the consistency it would provide for the students in receiving consequences. This program also eliminated the inconsistency of teachers in following tardy policy.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

After gaining approval of the Lock Out Program from the administration, the practicum writer gathered information pertaining to the number of referrals received in the Assistant Principals office during the second nine week period and the number of out of school suspensions received due to those referrals. A meeting with the Assistant Principals took place in order to determine the amount of time they were currently spending on the discipline of these tardy referrals (Appendix B: 27).

Prior to implementation the writer met with a group of 35 teachers who volunteered to help with the program. Twenty-nine teachers volunteered to patrol the hallways during their conference period and bring the tardy student to a designated area. The remaining six teachers volunteered to act as recorder for their conference period where they would record each student's tardy on an index card showing date, period and action taken for each tardy.

A memo was prepared by the practicum writer, signed by one of the Assistant Principals, and sent to all

faculty members explaining an overview of the Lock Out Program and asking their cooperation in abiding by the policies of the program. Students were notified of the new Lock Out Program by our live TV morning show which gives all announcements. The students and teachers were informed that for one tardy, a one day work detail in the cafeteria for 15 minutes of their lunch period would be assigned. Two tardies would result in a two day work detail and the student's parents would be informed of the work detail by sending a letter with the student which had to be signed and returned to the Assistant Principal the next school day. Three tardies would require a parent conference to be held by phone or in person before the student could return to school. Fourth and all subsequent tardies resulted in a day of out of school suspension or after school work detail. Because of the location of the school and the entire student body being transported by buses, after school work detail placed the responsibility on the parent to provide transportation home for the student. The students who elected to choose after school work detail were supervised by an Assistant Principal and/or the Custodian Night Crew Leaders. Responsibilities were assigned to the students and

periodic checks were made to see that the student was fulfilling their obligations.

The cost of the program was kept to a minimum. Index cards used to record name, date, period and action was required along with a large file box. An "Unexcused Tardy" stamp was purchased to make passes back to class for the tardy students. The major factor involved in this program was the time given by the volunteer teachers.

The practicum author served as recorder during first and fifth periods of the day. When the Assistant Principals were not available during these times, the practicum writer was responsible for sending letters to parents, recording tardies, given passes to class, recording work detail on the proper lunch work detail board and counseling of students to make them aware of the consequences of future tardies.

Time Line

Before Implementation

Before implementation of the program, a baseline of the amount of time each Assistant Principal spent on dealing with tardy referrals was taken. The practicum writer also established a file with blank index cards with the date, period and action columns. Unexcused

tardy passes were also made in advance to extradite the process of returning students to their classes with as little time as possible. The practicum writer was responsible for maintaining these supplies for the Assistant Principals and or recorder.

First - Tenth Week

During the ten week implementation period of the Lock Out Program, students were required to sign each time they were tardy on a sheet of paper listing date and period. A daily tally was maintained by the practicum writer of how many students were tardy each period (Appendix C: 28) and the amount of students receiving four or more tardies which resulted in an out of school suspension or after school work detail as a discipline measure. A daily conference with at least one of the Assistant Principals was held to determine the impact of the program, and to determine if any modifications were necessary.

After the first week of implementation, the reasons for high numbers of third period tardies were discussed with the Assistant Principals. The reflection of high numbers were determined to be because this was the practicum site's lunch period and the number recorded, included a total of three separate lunch periods.

It was also decided by the two Assistant Principals and the practicum writer before implementation of the Tardy Lock Out Program not to include homeroom in the lock out because of the time limit of ten minutes. It was noted during the first week, however, that a large amount of students were arriving late to homeroom. At the beginning of the second week, a meeting with the Assistant Principals and the practicum writer was held to discuss the tardies to homeroom. It was determined, at that time, that the process of recording a student's tardy and giving him an unexcused pass to class would not take but a few minutes and the student would have sufficient time to get to class and be counted as present when roll was taken. Therefore, homeroom was then included in the Lock Out Program.

After the third week of implementation, it was noted that the amount of tardies were beginning to decline. However, an increase in tardies was noted during the ninth week of the program. This was determined to be the result of this week being the week after Spring Break.

During the ninth week of implementation a time chart was again filled out by the assistant principals to determine the amount of time they were now spending on the discipline of tardy students.

Eleventh Week

The final results were tabulated at the end of the tenth week. The number of suspensions for the time period were recorded. The amount of time spent in disciplining tardies from the baseline and time line chart were tabulated and compared, and total number of tardies were calculated.

Feedback from the administrators, volunteer teachers and other academic teachers was gathered. These results were used to determine whether the practicum objectives were achieved and to review the success of the program. The principal of the practicum site stated that it seemed to deter the amount of fights in the hallways during the five minute passing time due to increased teacher supervision on their conference period to detain tardy students.

Student dissatisfaction with the Lock Out Program was heard from the beginning of the Tardy Lock Out Program. Students wrote about their dissatisfaction in the school newspaper. The topic was also heard discussed in the hallways. Prior to implementation, students were allowed three tardies in each class or a total of 18 tardies in all 6 classes before any action was taken. Now, however, every student in the practicum site received some action for each tardy. The

inconsistency of teachers to report tardies before implementation of the Lock Out Program, no longer was a factor and students who before were overlooked for their tardies began to receive equal treatment for being tardy to class.

As the implementation time progressed, several teachers informed the practicum writer that the Lock Out Program had drastically reduced the number of tardies in their classroom.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results of this project were measured by tabulating data from the second nine weeks grading period which was prior to implementation and comparing those results with the data collected at the end of the ten week implementation of the Lock Out Program. Based upon the data collected throughout the implementation period, the practicum writer concluded that the decrease in the number of tardies, and a decrease in the amount of time spent on the discipline of these referrals was a direct result of the writer's program.

The first objective: The percentage of tardy referrals would decrease by at least 50 percent--was successfully met. Prior to implementation of the Tardy Lock Out Program, 332 tardy referrals were turned into the Assistant Principal's office. To obtain a referral for tardies prior to implementation, a student must have received four unexcused tardies. During the ten week implementation of the Tardy Lock Out Program, 44 students received four or more tardies (Appendix D: 29).

The percentage of decrease was 87 percent. This exceeded the writer's first expectation.

The second objective: The percentage of out of school suspensions would show a decrease of 50 percent--was not successful. Upon completion of the implementation period, 44 students could have received out of school suspension. Eight of these students chose to receive after school work detail, which reduced the amount of out of school suspension to 36 (Appendix E: 30). These results showed a 20 percent increase in out of school suspensions as compared to the 30 out of school suspensions received during the second nine week grading period. In reviewing the data from the second nine weeks, it was noted that 18 students receiving out of school suspensions during this time, also received out of school suspensions during the implementation period. Also noted, was the fact that these 44 students who had excessive tardies of four or more, have also received referrals for misbehavior both prior to and during the implementation period.

The third objective: The percentage of time the Assistant Principals spent in dealing with the discipline of tardy referrals would decrease from 40 percent to 20 percent of their time--was successfully met (Appendix F: 31). The practicum writer used a

baseline taken before implementation of the Tardy Lock Out Program which showed approximately 180 minutes a day used in the discipline of tardy referrals and compared it to a timeline chart taken during the ninth week of implementation. This timeline reflects approximately 60 minutes a day spent on the discipline of tardies which shows a reduction from 40 percent of an Assistant Principal's time to 15 percent of their time being used for tardy discipline.

The fourth objective: The percentage of teachers surveyed who felt tardies were a problem would reduce from 75 percent to 25 percent. . .was successfully met (Appendix G: 32). When the question was asked of the 25 teachers who had returned their survey before implementation if tardies continued to be a major problem in their classes, 100 percent replied that tardies were no longer a major problem. This shows a reduction of 100 percent.

An overall positive result was noted by the practicum writer. Teachers' and administrators' comments have supported that the Tardy Lock Out Program has reduced the problem of tardies, and has also deterred problems in the hallways due to increased teacher supervision.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the success of the Tardy Lock Out Program and the positive feedback received from teachers and administration at the practicum site, the practicum writer has been informed that the program will continue through the remaining days of the school year. The fact that this project has reduced the number of tardies and the amount of time spent in dealing with the discipline of these tardies, it was the writer's recommendation to administration to continue the use of the Tardy Lock Out Program in future school years. The writer will help coordinate this program in future years while at the practicum site.

The writer would also recommend that the district office study the results of this project for possible use for all junior and senior high schools. The writer would be available to conduct small workshops to show steps necessary for implementation of a Tard Lock Out Program, or discuss methods to any school interested.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TEACHER SURVEY

Do you have a large number of tardies in your class?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you feel students receive lower academic grades because of tardies?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you feel an allowance of 18 tardies in a nine week period is too much?

Yes ☐ No ☐

What problems do you feel in current tardy program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

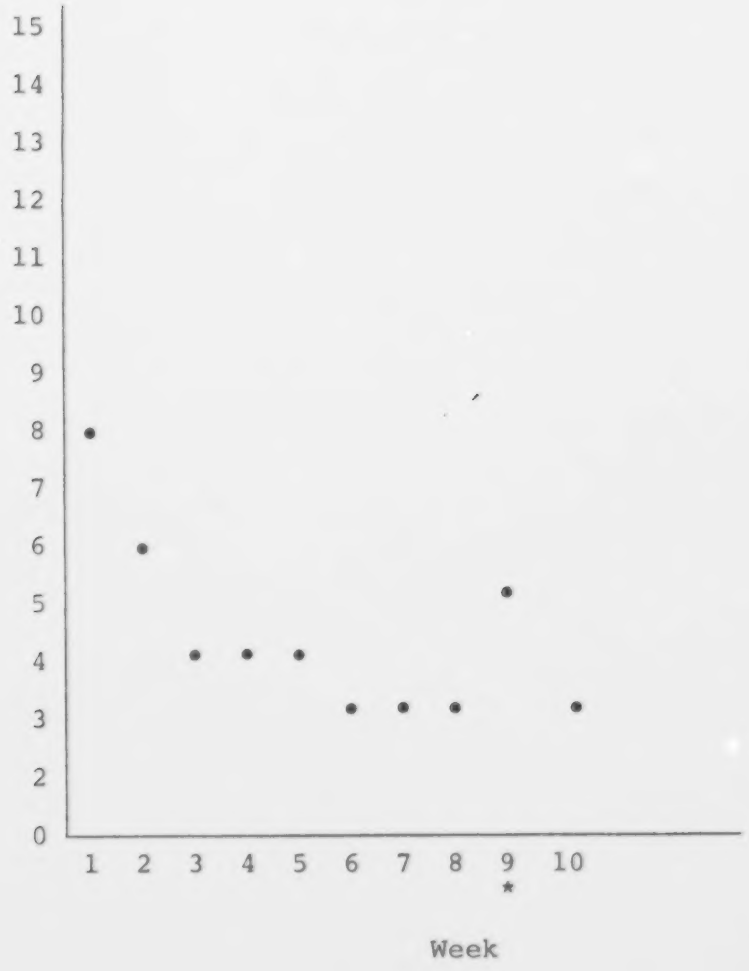
APPENDIX B

MINUTES SPENT ON TARDY REFERRALS

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
6th					
5th					
4th					
3rd					
2nd					
1st					

APPENDIX C

WEEKLY CLASS TARDY AVERAGE



*Week following Spring Break

APPENDIX D

WEEKLY NUMBER OF REFERRALS

Week	Prior to Implementation	During Implementation	Percentage of Decrease/Increase
1	25	1	- 96
2	18	1	- 94
3	39	0	-100
4	27	0	-100
5	51	2	- 96
6	42	1	- 97
7	30	6	- 80
8	38	8	- 78
9	34	18	- 47
10	28	7	- 75
Total	332	44	

APPENDIX E

OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS

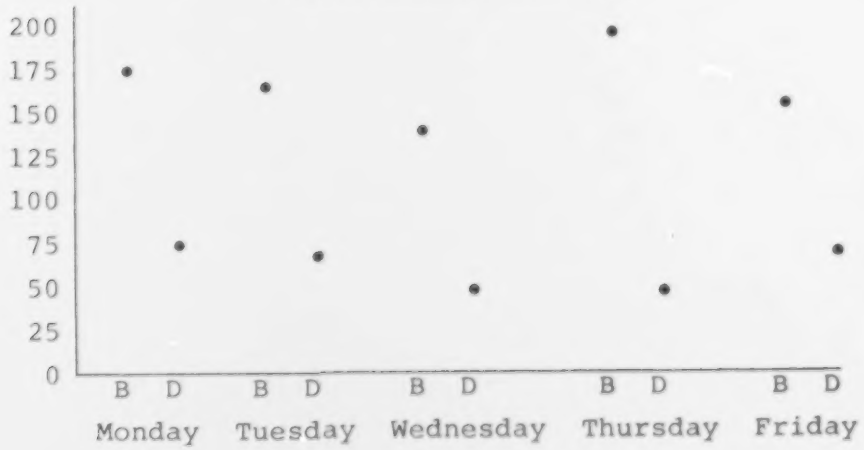
Week	Prior to Implementation	After Implementation	Percentage of Decrease/Increase
1	0	1	+100
2	0	1	+100
3	3	0	-100
4	7	0	-100
5	2	2	0
6	4	1	- 75
7	4	6	+ 50
8	5	6	+ 20
9	3	16	+433
10	2	3	+ 50
Total	22	30	

APPENDIX F

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL'S DAILY TIME

SPENT ON TARDY REFERRALS

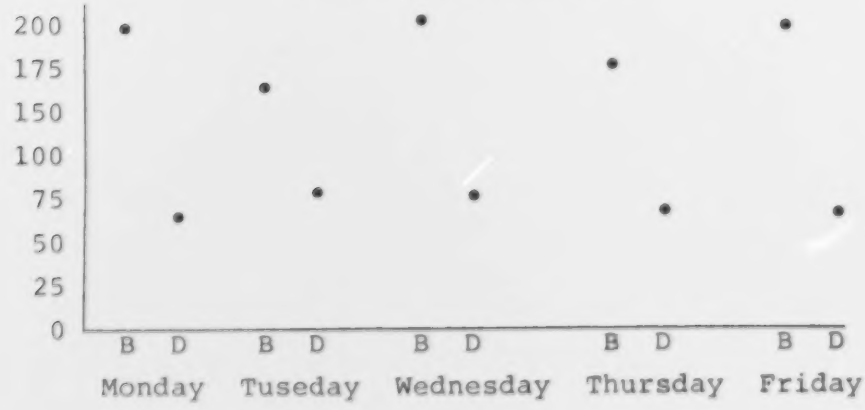
Assistant Principal I



B - Before Implementation

D - During Implementation

Assistant Principal II



APPENDIX G

TEACHER SURVEY

Do you have a large number of tardies in your class?

Teacher	Before Implementation	After Implementation
1	Yes	No
2	Yes	No
3	No	No
4	Yes	No
5	Yes	No
6	Yes	No
7	Yes	No
8	Yes	No
9	No	No
10	Yes	No
11	Yes	No
12	Yes	No
13	No	No
14	No	No
15	Yes	No
16	Yes	No
17	Yes	No
18	No	No
19	Yes	No
20	Yes	No
21	No	No
22	Yes	No
23	Yes	No
24	Yes	No
25	Yes	No

END

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